

The background of the slide features a close-up, slightly blurred image of a notebook with lined paper. A pencil is visible on the left side, resting on the paper. The overall color palette is warm, with shades of brown and beige.

# *Engaging Parents* Family-School Partnerships

Charter Start! Workshop

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Presented by: Diane Demarest

# How is your school doing?

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your school on parent engagement?

What type of school are you?

Partnership, Open-door, Come-if-we-call School or Fortress School.

[*Rubric handout*]

# What is your vision for parent engagement ?

Parent engagement has the potential to create a story of a shared world in which educators and parents lay their knowledge alongside one another in schools to support and enhance the learning outcomes of children and to strengthen parents, families, schools and communities.

Debbie Pushor, 2008



# Engagement or Involvement?

**‘Involvement’** comes from the Latin, ‘involvere,’ which means ‘to roll into’ and by extension implies wrapping up or enveloping parents somehow into the system” .

Parents who are “involved” serve the school’s agenda by doing the things educators ask or expect them to do – volunteering at school, parenting in positive ways, and supporting and assisting their children at home with their schoolwork – while knowledge, voice and decision-making continue to rest with the educators (Pushor, 2001).

Parents are asked by educators to serve as “audience, spectators, fund raisers, aides, organizers” (McGilp & Michael, 1994, p. 2). It is most often the role of parents to carry out the tasks professional educators determine to be needed.

**Epstein's (1995) comprehensive parent involvement framework is well-known and highly regarded within educational communities.**

- 1. Parenting**
- 2. Communicating**
- 3. Supporting the School**
- 4. Learning at Home**
- 5. Decision Making**
- 6. Collaborating with the Community**

While useful, this model maintains the hierarchical structure of schools, where school personnel maintain power and authority, and the focus remains on what parents can do for the school.

# Engagement in contrast:

“Engagement,” in comparison to involvement, comes from en, meaning “make,” and gage, meaning “pledge” – to make a pledge , to make a moral commitment.

The word engagement is further defined as “contact by fitting together; ... the meshing of gears” (Engagement).

# Involvement & Engagement

- Not one or the other but rather a continuum
- Involvement ►► Engagement ►► Leadership
- Not static system
- What can change the status?



# Why strive for

- Involvement?
- Engagement?
- Leadership?



# Research Indicates the Top 5 Reasons to Engage Parents are:

1. Research shows that when parents are engaged students have:
  - a) Higher grades, test scores and graduation rates
  - b) Better attendance
  - c) Increased motivation and self-esteem
  - d) Lower rates of suspension
  - e) Decreased use of drugs & alcohol
  - f) Fewer instances of violent behavior
2. Family participation in education is twice as predictive of student's academic success as family SES

3. School benefits through:

- a) Improved teacher morale
- b) Higher ratings of teachers by parents
- c) More support
- d) Better reputation in the community
- e) Higher student achievement

4. Parent engagement leads to feeling of ownership and greater support of the school.

5. Parents express a genuine and deep-seated desire to help their children succeed academically regardless of differences in socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity or cultural background.

# **Barriers to Family Engagement:**

1. TIME

2. Culture

3. Uncertainty

# How can you improve parent engagement?

- First you need to know how you're doing



# How do you know how you're doing?

Identify some ways to assess-

- Surveys – written, phone, online
- Parents create a report card for the school
- Focus groups
- Task force/committee (parents, teachers, students)
- Observations
- Anecdotal information from visitors and parents
- Suggestion box
- Programmatic audits
- Accreditation visits

# What Data Will You Gather?

1. The welcoming environment of the school toward families
2. The degree to which the school supports learning at home
3. Effective two-way communication between home and school
4. Important issues in family engagement (i.e. policy, governance, parental efficacy)

# Take a Sample Survey

- Based on the work of Debbie Pushor and John O'Meara
- Develop survey indicators based on research, best practices, your mission and vision.
- Rankings – A,B,C, level of agreement, satisfaction, need improvement, meets or exceed expectations. Be sure that the results provide a measurable response and way to compare change. Combination of your questions and responses.



SET  
GOALS





# Design Plan or Interventions



*Bienvenido*



## Share 2 stories

- Princess Alexandra Community School - Pushor, D. & Ruitenberg, C. (2005) Parent Engagement and Leadership; Teaching and Learning Research Exchange.
- Voice-Mail Applications (Constantino, S. (2005) Engaging all families; The Role of Technology in Family Partnerships.

# Discussion

*Thank you*